

# CONNECTIONS AREA AGENCY ON AGING 2019 ANNUAL REPORT





# MISSION

"TO ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE  
FOR ELDERS IN OUR SERVICE AREA  
THROUGH EDUCATION, PLANNING AND  
COORDINATION OF SERVICES"

# VISION

"TO HELP OLDER IOWANS TO AGE IN PLACE, SAVE  
RESOURCES AND MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS ALONG THE  
AGING PROCESS"

# 2019 YEAR IN REVIEW

## MESSAGE FROM KELLY BUTTS-ELSTON, CEO

As we close out another fiscal year, it's important to assess and review our progress and our setbacks as we move forward. Fiscal year 2019 was a year of success, innovation, opportunity and of course challenges.

We saw increased participation in our caregiver program due to stability in our staffing and the implementation of two support groups: One for grandparents who are raising their grandchildren – a group that meets bi-monthly in the Sioux City area; and an online caregiver support group which provides convenient interaction on the caregivers' terms and timelines. Our Care Transition program continued to experience growth and definition last year. Connections started the service of Care Transitions working with one hospital, Methodist Jennie Edmundson, in Council Bluffs to ensure that individuals being discharged from the hospital had the support and services needed to successfully heal and not be readmitted. As we were then the only AAA in Iowa providing Care Transitions service, this led to a pilot project with the Iowa Department on Aging called Iowa Return to Community (IRTC). IRTC provides support, services and options for individuals seeking to return home after a hospitalization or a stay in a skilled nursing facility. We are proud that at least in part due to our efforts, another AAA in Iowa is offering Care Transition service in the current fiscal year!

Our congregate meal numbers continue to decrease; and this closely tracks with trends statewide and nationally. As participants leave the program due to a higher level of care placement or by death, we are not seeing the newly eligible participants come in to replace them in number. Baby Boomers have made it clear that they are not interested in attending a congregate meal setting five days per week to access their nutritional needs, so we will need to be innovative and responsive in order to meet the needs of individuals who are over age 60 and food-insecure. This will be one of our greatest challenges in the upcoming 5-10 years. Our staff continues to thrive and set standards for excellence in our field. Our leadership team has a combined 95 years of service to our agency, and this serves us well as we serve those who entrust us with their care.

Most individuals who are over 65 in Iowa (approximately 90%) favor remaining in their own homes as they age. The dedicated staff and volunteer network of Connections AAA are honored and privileged to help support and provide navigation for those individuals and their caregivers. It is a mission that we do not take lightly, and we look forward to serving as your Area Agency on Aging going forward into the next decade.

Respectfully,

Kelly Butts-Elston, C.E.O.





Message from Board  
President

On behalf of the board of directors and agency personnel, it's my honor to present the Annual Report for FY'2019 for Connections Area Agency on Aging. The board takes very seriously our role in setting policy, the development of the agency budget, and the advocacy for aging Iowans in our 20-county service area.

I'm proud to lead a board that is engaged and active in the

advocacy of older Iowans. Our membership includes retired executives; members with governmental experience; active volunteers with Meals on Wheels and the Senior Health Insurance Information Program; individuals who utilize Older Americans Act programs; and aging and disability network professionals.

Fiscal Year 2019 was filled with many successes and accomplishments. We moved our corporate headquarters in Council Bluffs to a much more visible and accessible location; we saw expansion and growth in our Iowa Return to Community Program; we experienced stability in our staffing after the MCO-driven downsizing of two years ago; and we saw the agency become more proficient with data collection and utilization in the development of programming and service delivery.

We were not without challenges and tough decisions, however. Largely due to capacity, we ended our sponsorships with two Senior Corps programs, The Foster Grandparent Program and The Senior Companion Program. We retained our sponsorship of the Retired Senior Volunteer Program. We realized that with the reduction in funding due to managed care business changes, we simply did not have the capacity to produce the required financial match to sustain these wonderful programs. Instead we renewed our focus on our primary operations of the planning, education, advocacy and coordination of services to help older Iowans and their family caregivers remain independent.

We are proud of our agency, and its dedicated staff and volunteers. We look forward to leading the agency into the next decade and we are honored to serve aging individuals and family caregivers in western, southwestern and south-central Iowa.

Sincerely,

Tom Hoogestraat, Board President  
Connections Area Agency on Aging



## BOARD LISTING & ADVISORY COUNCIL LISTING

### Board Members:

#### Officers

**Chair-Tom Hoogestraat, Mills County**  
**Vice Chair-Bonnie Godden, Taylor County**  
**Secretary-Kari Livermore, Woodbury County**

#### Members

**George Gillespie, Pottawattamie County**  
**Lori Harvey, Adams County**  
**Mark Monson, Woodbury County**  
**Cathay Pringnitz, Cass County**  
**Barb Redmond, Woodbury County**

### Advisory Council

#### Officers:

**Robert Neumann-Pottawattamie County**  
**Robert Johnson, Clarke County**

#### Members:

**Joan Bruhn, Woodbury County**  
**Nancy Coziahr-Pottawattamie County**  
**Shelli Dannenberg-Ida County**  
**Rick Friday-Union County**  
**Julie Handbury-Pottawattamie County**  
**Wendy Jackson-Woodbury County**  
**Jan Messner-Pottawattamie County**  
**Carol Plowman, Adair County**  
**Arlene Schwartz-Adair County**  
**Ardelle Staver-Cherokee County**





## BY THE NUMBERS



**3,172**

Individuals provided  
Information & Assistance



**81,550**

Meals served  
at meals sites



**43,281**

Rides provided



**2,227**

Outreach Presentations  
and events



**628**

Return to Community  
Program referrals



**195**

Elder Abuse Assessments  
and Consultations  
completed



**101,390**

Number of home  
delivered meals



**31,988**

Caregivers reached  
with information



**6,207**

Units of In Home Services  
to keep aging Iowan's  
independent

# VOLUNTEER IMPACT 2019

186 RSVP  
Volunteers  
gave  
**9,693**  
volunteer hours

Volunteer hours  
delivering home  
delivered meals

**11,667**

**1,306**  
People assisted by  
Medicare  
counseling

**\$1,338,563**

Amount saved though  
working with SHIIP  
Counselors in Council Bluffs  
and Sioux City



## SUCCESSFUL INDEPENDENCE: A CARE TRANSITIONS STORY

Every Care Transition case is different. There are a variety of services and interventions used by our Connections Coaches to ensure that individuals who are discharged from a hospital visit or a stint at rehab can successfully return to their home and live independently. Sometimes the interventions are minimal – medication review, a few frozen meals and transportation to a follow up appointment, and our clients are healthy and healed and ready to resume their independence. Mr. J. was not one of those cases.

We began working with Mr. J. when we received a referral from a local hospital about a patient that they discovered in their Emergency Department. Mr. J. complained of excruciating pain in his back. Complicating his situation, Mr. J. was homeless; had no income nor insurance; and the hospital suspected that he was merely trying to obtain pain pills. In a nutshell, Mr. J. presented to us in an extremely fragile state. When we began working with him, he identified a friend who allowed him to stay at his home. This was a huge victory for us as it provided a base of operations and a place for us to meet and consult with Mr. J. Our next victory came when we were able to get him a primary care physician and medical home – also something that he did not have prior to our intervention. Our coach also helped Mr. J. apply for Medicaid so that he would have insurance for his health needs. Mr. J.'s doctor ordered tests; discovered that he had a broken back and had been dealing with this condition for a long period of time. His pain and inability to walk more than two or three steps was confirmed medically and was thus able to be treated properly.

Having addressed his medical issues, our Transition Coach then moved on to tackle lifestyle issues that were causing Mr. J. to face barriers to independence, such as being homeless and having no income. Our coach helped Mr. J. apply for subsidized housing and for Social Security, and he was able to move into his very own apartment in 2019. Community based organizations were engaged to furnish his new home, and Mr. J. was transitioned to our traditional case management program for ongoing service coordination to help him retain his newly found independence. Our Coach was nearly moved to tears when upon knocking on his door to follow up with Mr. J. after a period of several months of his participation in case management, he answered without the use of a walker or cane. One year after he could barely take one step due to pain, living on the couch of a friend with no income, Mr. J. was walking on his own, in his own apartment, paid for by his own income and looking forward to watching the Kansas City Chiefs play this past fall.

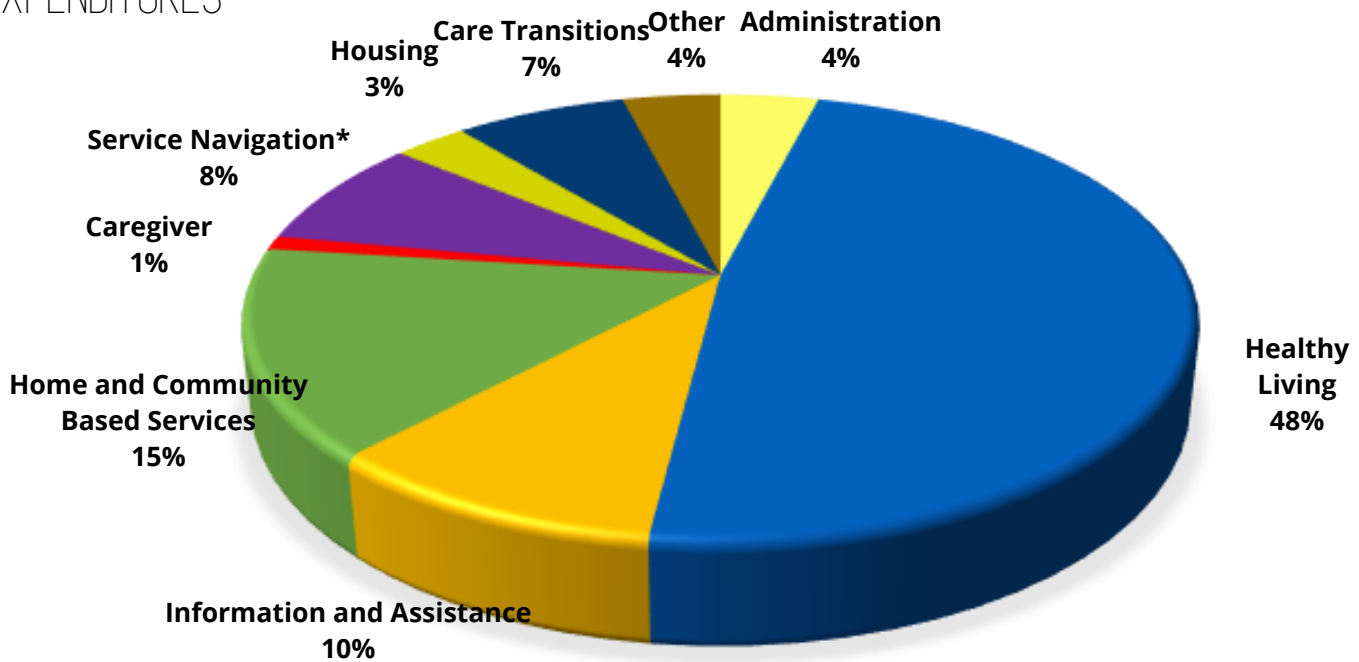
While extreme and complex, this case exhibits the dedication and commitment of the entire staff of CAAA and our Care Transition program to enhance quality of life for aging Iowans.





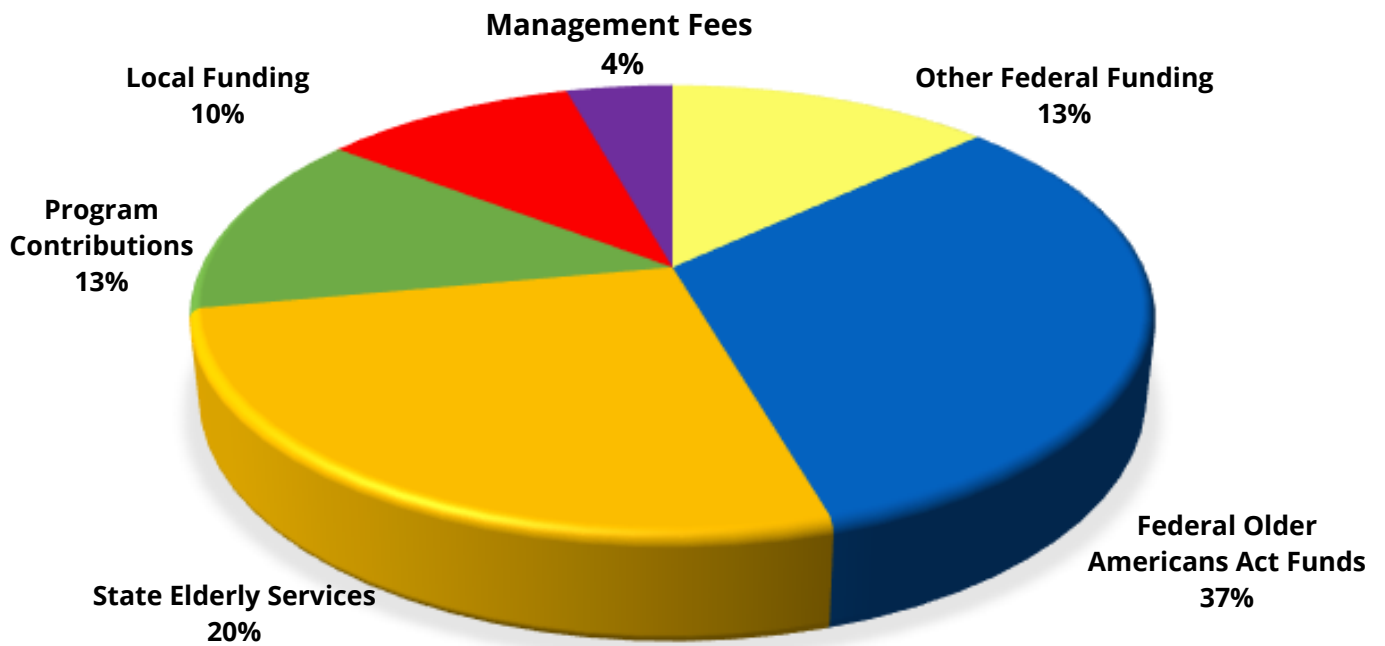
# FISCAL YEAR 2019

## EXPENDITURES



TOTAL EXPENDITURES:  
\$5,518,118

## REVENUES



TOTAL REVENUE:  
\$5,255,933

\*Service Navigation includes Options Counseling and Case Management Funds

# WALKING THE JOURNEY WITH CONNECTIONS

SHARED BY CAREGIVER CHRISTY HAGEN



My journey with Connections AAA began many years ago. As a Social Worker, I referred to them many times, they were always a supportive resource for my clients. But I never thought we would need their services.

However, that all changed Memorial Day of 2018! On that day, My husband Dan had a massive heart attack on the operating table.

It was recommended that Dan go directly to a facility equipped to handle the care he needed. Our family decided that we wanted him to be able to live what time he had left in the comfort of his home. So, I left my teaching position and became Dan's fulltime 24/7 caregiver.

Due to his health he could never be left alone! I filled a very comprehensive and critical list of roles in his life, every day of that final year of his life. I say this not to complain, but to be thankful and appreciate that Dan and I were able to share this time together!!

I spoke with friends and they referred me to Connections AAA's, Family Caregiver Program. I spoke with Jan Schnack, Family Caregiver specialist and I cried the very first time we spoke. I know I did many times after that. While I am so thankful, I had that time with Dan, at times, it was so overwhelming, intense, and exhausting on many levels.

As a caregiver who deeply loves their loved one, it can create guilt feelings that you feel stressed and tired over caring for this loved one. And even angry that both of you have to be going through this. Personally, and as a Social Worker, I knew the critical need of receiving respite services. Those 4 hours 2x per week were so crucial in providing the opportunity to deal successfully with those emotions that could have escalated very quickly to a place we did not want to go!

It was also very significant that Jan understood the need for me to get a break and encouraged me to feel that it was ok, and not to feel guilty about leaving Dan. As much as you want to be the caregiver, it also comes with very complicated issues

In our journey with Connections AAA, every person, no matter their role, that I had interactions with treated me and my needs like they were the most important part of their life at the time! I thank them for their special "gift"!





# OUR YEAR IN PICTURES

RSVP Volunteer Recognition  
Event



March for Meals



Health fair



Council Bluffs office  
moves down town



Health fair



Golf  
Tournament



Health Fair



Open House





Night Under the Stars



Creston Chalk Walk



Grandparents Raising  
Grandchildren  
Support Group Started



Jeanna Bull is awarded  
the Alrene Steege Award



Golf Tournament  
Post Play Party



RSVP Volunteer Recognition Event

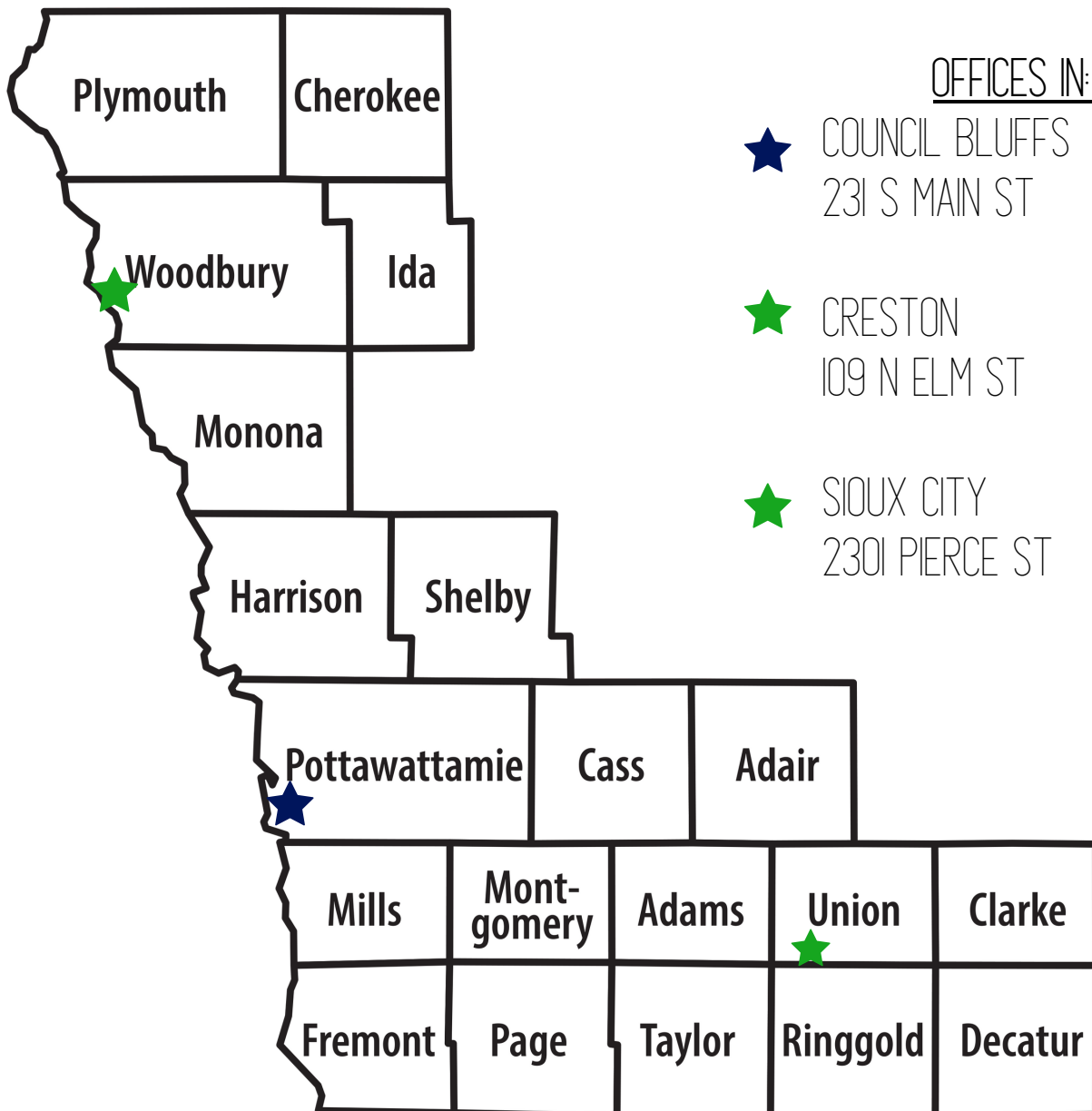


Family Caregiver Commerical  
Aired in Sioux City



OWEP  
Sucessful job  
candidate





800-432-9209

[WWW.CONNECTIONSAAA.ORG](http://WWW.CONNECTIONSAAA.ORG)

